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WE CLAIM:

1 *DI-sub* 1. A method for facilitating a chat session between a
2 *et seq* first user and a second user, both visiting a first web server, the
3 method comprising:
4 receiving, from the first user, a first user ID corresponding
5 to the first user and an address of the first web server;
6 receiving, from the second user, a second user ID
7 corresponding to the second user and the address of the first web
8 server;
9 providing, to the first user, at least an indication of the
10 second user ID; ✓
11 receiving, from the first user, a request to open one of a
12 public chat session, a semi-public chat session and a private chat
13 session with the second user;
14 transmitting, to the second user, an indication that the first
15 user has requested one of the public chat session, the semi-public
16 chat session and the private chat session; and
17 receiving, from the second user, an acceptance to enter the
18 chat session designated by the first user.

1 *DI-sub* 2. The method of claim 1, wherein the chat session is a

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2 public chat session and wherein the chat session is visible to
3 other users.

1 ~~DI~~ 3. The method of claim 1, wherein the chat session is a
2 private chat session and wherein the chat session is not visible to
3 other users.

1 ~~DI~~ 4. The method of claim 1, wherein the chat session is a
2 semi-public chat session and wherein the chat session is visible
3 only to users having a predetermined user profile.

1 ~~DI~~ 5. The method of claim 1, wherein the providing step further
2 comprises:
3 receiving, from the first user, a query for information
4 regarding other users visiting the first web site; and
5 searching a user database to determine which users are
6 visiting the first web site.

1 6. The method of claim 5, wherein the query includes a
2 request for other users having predetermined personal data.

1 ~~DI~~ 7. A method for providing usage information of a first web

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2 site designated by a user, the method comprising:
3 receiving, from the user, a designation of the first web
4 site as a homepage;
5 monitoring usage of the homepage by a plurality of users;
6 and
7 transmitting data representative of the usage to the user
8 when the user is visiting a second web page.

1 8. The method of claim 7, further comprising:
2 displaying to the user the usage information in a graphical
3 format.

1 9. The method of claim 7, further comprising:
2 displaying to the user the usage information in a text
3 format.

1 10. The method of claim 7, wherein the usage information
2 is displayed automatically to the user.

1 11. The method of claim 7, wherein the usage information
2 is displayed only upon a command-generated by the user.

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1 12. A computer-readable medium encoded with processing
2 instructions for implementing a method for facilitating a chat
3 session between a first user and second user, both visiting a
4 first web server, the method comprising:

5 receiving, from the first user, a first user ID
6 corresponding to the first user and an address of the first web
7 server;

8 receiving, from the second user, a second user ID
9 corresponding to the second user and the address of the first web
10 server;

11 providing, to the first user, at least an indication of the
12 second user ID;

13 receiving, from the first user, a request to open one of a
14 public chat session, a semi-public chat session and a private
15 chat session with the second user;

16 transmitting, to the second user, an indication that the
17 first user has requested one of the public chat session, the
18 semi-public chat session and the private chat session; and

19 receiving, from the second user, an acceptance to enter the
20 chat session designated by the first user.

1 13. An apparatus for facilitating a chat session between a

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2 first user and second user, both visiting a first web server,
3 comprising:

4 a processor; and

5 a memory storing processing instructions for
6 controlling the processor, the processor operative with the
7 processing instructions to:

8 receive, from the first user, a first user ID
9 corresponding to the first user and an address of the first web
10 server;

11 receive, from the second user, a second user ID
12 corresponding to the second user and the address of the first web
13 server;

14 provide, to the first user, at least an indication of
15 the second user ID;

16 receive, from the first user, a request to open one of
17 a public chat session, a semi-public chat session and a private
18 chat session with the second user;

19 transmit, to the second user, an indication that the
20 first user has requested one of the public chat session, the
21 semi-public chat session and a private chat session; and

22 receive, from the second user, an acceptance to enter
23 the chat session designated by the first user.

1 14. A computer-readable medium encoded with processing
2 instructions for implementing a method for providing usage
3 information of a first web site designated by a user, the method
4 comprising:

5 receiving, from the user, a designation of the first
6 web page as a homepage;

7 monitoring usage of the homepage by a plurality of
8 users; and

9 transmitting data representative of the usage to the
10 user when the user is visiting a second web page.

1 15. An apparatus for providing usage information of a
2 first web site designated by a user, comprising:

3 a processor; and

4 a memory storing processing instructions for
5 controlling the processor, the processor operative with the
6 processing instructions to:

7 receive, from the user, a designation of the first
8 web page as a homepage;

9 monitor usage of the homepage by a plurality of
10 users; and

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11 transmit data representative of the usage to the
12 user when the user is visiting a second web page.

1 16. A method for facilitating a communication between a
2 first user and second user, both visiting a first web server,
3 the method, comprising:
4 receiving, from the first user, a first user ID
5 corresponding to the first user and an address of the first web
6 server;
7 receiving, from the second user, a second user ID
8 corresponding to the second user and the address of the first web
9 server;
10 providing, to the first user, at least an indication of
11 the second user ID; and
12 receiving, from the first user, a request to
13 communicate with the second user.

1 17. The method of claim 16, further comprising:
2 transmitting, to the second user, an indication that
3 the first user has requested a communication; and
4 receiving, from the second user, an acceptance to
5 receive a communication from the first user.

1 18. A computer readable medium encoded with processing
2 instructions for performing a method for facilitating a
3 communication between a first user and second user, both visiting
4 a first web server, the method comprising:
5 receiving, from the first user, a first user ID
6 corresponding to the first user and an address of the first web
7 server;
8 receiving, from the second user, a second user ID
9 corresponding to the second user and the address of the first web
10 server;
11 providing, to the first user, at least an indication of
12 the second user ID; and
13 receiving, from the first user, a request to
14 communicate with the second user.

1 19. An apparatus for facilitating a communication between a
2 first user and second user, both visiting a first web server,
3 the apparatus comprising:
4 a processor; and

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5 a memory storing processing instructions for
6 controlling the processor, the processor operative with the
7 processing instructions to:

8 receive, from the first user, a first user ID
9 corresponding to the first user and an address of the first web
10 server;

11 receive, from the second user, a second user ID
12 corresponding to the second user and the address of the first web
13 server;

14 provide, to the first user, at least an indication
15 of the second user ID;

16 receive, from the first user, a request to
17 communicate with the second user; and

18 provide to the second user an address for
19 communicating with the second user.

add
ID